

*magnum, subdescendens, gonyx ascendens : remiges tertius et quartus fere æquales et longissimi.*

- D. nuchalis ♂. *Capite, gula, dorso et alis nigris : primariis brunneo-nigris : macula magna nuchali, fascia alari et uropygio albis ; cauda nigro-brunnea : subtus albus ; rostro corneo, mandibula ad basin nigricante ; pedibus nigris.*

Head, throat, and entire upper parts black, with slight bluish reflections upon the back ; a conspicuous white spot in the centre of the neck behind ; primaries brownish black, smaller coverts tipped with white forming an alar bar ; rump white ; upper tail-coverts black ; tail blackish brown, the feathers rather pointed ; entire underparts and flanks white ; bill very thick at the base, converging to a sharp point, horn-colour ; the base of mandible and sides of maxilla blackish ; feet and tarsi black.

Total length 5 inches ; wing  $2\frac{5}{8}$  in. ; tail  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. ; tarsus  $\frac{5}{8}$  in.

*Hab.* Orinoco, on the borders of British Guiana.

The singular Finch here described was received by Madame Verdey, of Paris, in a small collection obtained on the Orinoco river, on the borders of British Guiana. In its general coloration and in the markings of its plumage it is not unlike the members of the genus *Spermophila*, and, were it not for its extraordinary bill, would seem to find its place most naturally in that genus. But the bill precludes such a disposition of this species ; and indeed there is no genus known to me under which it may be classified ; I have therefore proposed the term *Dolospingus* for this curious form. The type specimen was the only one sent, and now belongs to the Museum of Natural History of New York, for whose fine collection I have secured it.

### XXXIII.—*Stray Notes on Ornithology in India.*

By ALLAN HUME, C. B. No. VII.\*

I MENTIONED in one of my former letters that *Otis tetrax* and *Pterocles alchata* (neither of which, so far as I know, occurs in India east of the Indus) are during the cold season by no means uncommon west of the Indus, at Murdan. By the kindness of

Johnson, of the Guides, a taxidermist of mine has been

\* No. VI. *antèa*, p. 23.

working at this place during the last few months under that gentleman's supervision. It appears, from the first instalment of specimens received thence, that not only the two species above mentioned, but also *Corvus cornix*, *Corvus monedula*, *Corvus frugilegus*, *Ruticilla rufogularis*, *Alauda arvensis*, and several other species hitherto extremely rare in all Indian collections, are plentiful in this locality. But the great novelty which the collection contains is a splendid specimen (a female it is true) of *Otis tarda*, a species hitherto unrecorded from India. The bird was killed on the 23rd of December. It measured:—Length 33"; expanse 63"; tail from vent 8"·5; length of foot 2"·5; width of foot 2"·75; the wings when closed reached to within 3"·5 of end of tail. It weighed 8·25 lbs.; and the contents of the stomach were green mustard leaves. Five or six birds were seen, amongst which was at least one male; but only this single specimen could be procured, as the birds were very wary.

In No. 2 of Part I. of my "Rough Notes," I provisionally referred two young Fishing Eagles, obtained in the Etawah district, to *Haliaeetus pelagica*. Since then I have obtained from Europe a young specimen of *H. albicilla*, corresponding exactly with my birds; and I have now received from Murdan a perfectly adult male of this latter species, as well as a young female corresponding with the young birds procured in Etawah\*. The male was 32" in length, with an expanse of 82", and weighed 9·25 lbs. The female, a young bird, measured 35" in length, and 86" in expanse, but only weighed 6·5 lbs. I should add that in the Calcutta Museum I found a specimen of the young of this species, procured apparently in Lower Bengal and labelled *H. fulviventer* or *H. leucoryphus*, I forget which. The labels, however, of the mounted birds appear to have been so transposed during the interregnum that occurred between Mr. Blyth's departure and Mr. Anderson's advent, that it is impossible to be certain whether this specimen really was obtained in Lower Bengal.

An unnamed, but, as I believe, not unobserved species of Lark, of which numerous specimens have been sent from Murdan, remains to be characterized. It is intermediate between

[\* Cf. Jerdon, *antea*, p. 336.—ED.]

*Alauda pispoletta* and *Alaudala raytal*; and as it is, I believe, the species to which Adams refers (P. Z. S. 1858, p. 485) as "abundant on the banks of the Indus and Northern Scinde; size of the Grey Linnet; colour a sandy brown; bill short and nearly conical; hind claw long and curved; tail moderate and slightly forked, the upper feathers of which are black,"—I have named it

#### ALAUDA ADAMSI.

This new species at a first glance so closely resembles *Alaudala raytal* that I had erroneously so named it; but it differs in a few particulars so conspicuously that no doubt as to its specific distinctness can exist. In size and colour, and in most of its variations of plumage it is, to judge from a series of more than a dozen of each, absolutely undistinguishable from *A. raytal*. But whereas the bill of the latter is more lengthened and slender than those of the true Larks (measuring at front 0·5", not 0·38", as Jerdon wrongly gives it), the bill of *A. adamsi* is that of a true Lark, never measuring in front more than 0·36". The bill of the latter, besides being shorter, is much stouter and has the culmen far more curved. It is brown too, bluish horny at base of the lower mandible, and not pale yellowish horny with a faint brownish tinge on the culmen as in *A. raytal*. The legs are fleshy brown, not yellowish fleshy as in the latter; and the hind claw (though not long, being about 0·34") is *slightly* longer than that of *A. raytal*. Jerdon gives the wing of the latter as 3"; but none of my numerous specimens have it less than 3·15", and it runs to 3·3". The wing of *A. adamsi* is perhaps a shade longer, and varies from 3·2" to 3·4". The tail is "moderate and slightly forked;" but I see nothing of black upper feathers. True, in certain stages of plumage the lateral tail-feathers nearest the central ones are a *very* dark brown; but this is also to a certain extent the case with *A. raytal*. In this point alone does my new bird differ from that noticed, but left unnamed, by Adams. We have now a most interesting series of Old-World short-toed Larks—*calendrella*, *brachydactyla*, *pispoletta*, *adamsi*, and *Alaudala raytal*.

Whether the latter bird should really be generically separated

is doubtful; the bills of *A. raytal* and *A. adamsi* differ no more than do those of *Melanocorypha maxima* and *M. tatarica*, which they respectively greatly resemble.

One stage of the plumage of *A. adamsi* deserves special mention, because I have observed nothing analogous in *A. raytal*. Only one single specimen exhibits this stage. The date on which it was procured has unfortunately not been noted; but I conclude it to be in the nuptial garb.

In this stage each primary has a broad subterminal somewhat silvery or slightly greyish-white band, which, except in the first two or three, extends over both webs; the outer webs of the three tail-feathers next the central ones become almost wholly of this colour, and the inner webs are greatly blanched or, more properly, appear to be overlaid with this same greyish white. Is this an accidental variety? There is nothing in the single specimen before me to decide this question.

To Captain Unwin, of the Guides, I am indebted for a large collection of birds made by the taxidermist above alluded to under Captain Unwin's supervision, in the Agrore Valley and the neighbourhood of Abbotabad.

Besides specimens of many of the birds noticed from Murdan, it contains numerous specimens of *Saxicola kingi* (nobis), three unmistakable examples of *Aquila hastata* with an egg of this species, of which a full notice will appear in Part I, No. 3, of my "Rough Notes," and specimens of what I believe to be a new Goatsucker, which I characterize as

#### CAPRIMULGUS UNWINI.

This species has the upper three-fourths of the tarsus feathered in front. In both sexes the two outer tail-feathers on each side are tipped with white; but the tippings are about 1.5" and 1.0" broad in the male on the outer and penultimate feathers respectively, and only about 0.75" and 0.4" in the female; and in the latter sex the white is less pure. Both sexes have a white spot on the inner webs of the first three, and a corresponding one on the outer webs of the second and third primaries; but here again, while the spots on the inner webs of the male are about one inch broad, those of the female are about half that size.

This species therefore differs in its leading characteristics from all our Indian Goatsuckers. In general appearance it most resembles *C. kelaarti*; but as regards the white on the tail and the extent of the feathering of the tarsus it belongs to a different group from this species and *C. indicus*. The best description I can give of its plumage is, that it is an excessively pale and grey version of *C. indicus*, and that, while (with the exception of the difference in the size of the white markings on tail and wings) the sexes closely resemble each other, the under tail-coverts of the male are a uniform rufous buff, while those of the female are somewhat paler and are very distinctly barred with narrow bars more than a quarter of an inch apart.

The dimensions of a female measured in the flesh were:—Length 10·25"; expanse 19·25"; tail 4·75"; wing 6·95". Wings when closed reached to within one inch of the end of tail.

The male (not measured in the flesh) is slightly larger, and has the wing 7·2" long.

Through the kindness of Dr. Henderson, the medical officer of the party, the birds collected during the Yarkand Expedition have been submitted to me for examination. Dr. Henderson and I contemplate publishing shortly some notes on the ornithology of the expedition, with a few plates of the new and hitherto unfigured species of which he obtained specimens. In the mean time I here characterize briefly seven species which I believe to be new to science:—

1. *FALCO HENDERSONI*, sp. nov. The Shanghar.

*Male*.—Dimensions: length 20 inches; wing 14; tail from vent 7·5; tarsus 2·15, feathered for 1·3; mid toe to root of claw 1·7; its claw, straight from root to point, 0·63.

*Plumage*.—Upper surface like a female Kestrel, brown and grey brown, regularly and broadly barred throughout, except on the head, with bright rufous. Below creamy white, nearly spotless, except on the flanks, where it is broadly barred with dark brown\*.

2. *GALERIDA MAGNA*, sp. nov. The Crested Steppe-Lark.

*Male*.—Dimensions: length 8·0 inches; expanse 14·0; tail 3·0; wing 4·4; bill at front 0·75.

\* [Probably the same as *F. milvipes*, Jerdon, *antea*, p. 240.—Ed.]

*Plumage*.—Closely resembles *G. cristata*, but greatly exceeds it in size, and has in the adult a considerably fuller and longer crest. Its general tint is more sandy rufescent, or desert-colour, than is usual in *G. cristata*, and the striations on the back are nearly obsolete.

3. *SAXICOLA HENDERSONI*, sp. nov. Henderson's Stonechat.

*Male*.—Dimensions: length 6·0 inches; expanse 11·0; tail 2·7; wing 3·75; bill at front 0·45; tarsus 0·95.

*Plumage*.—Somewhat of the *S. atrigularis* type; differs in being blacker above and having the whole tail pure white, except the terminal three-fourths of the two central tail-feathers, which are black, and a terminal black band on the two exterior laterals, 0·7" wide on the exterior ones, 0·4" on the penultimate ones, and a black spot at the tip of the others, decreasing rapidly in size as the feathers approach the central ones, and in some specimens disappearing entirely on those next to these latter.

4. *TROCHALOPTERON SIMILE*, sp. nov.

Exactly resembles *T. variegatum*, which it replaces in the far north-west, except that the grey portions of the primaries and tail-feathers are pure French-grey, entirely untinged with yellow, olive, or orange.

5. *PODOCES HUMILIS*, sp. nov. The Dingy Chough-Thrush.

*Male*.—Dimensions: length 7·5 inches; tail 2·8; wing 3·75; bill at front 0·97 to 1; tarsus 1·25.

*Plumage*.—Forehead, lores, and an indistinct streak over the fore part of the eye fulvous white. Front, top, and back of the head, back, scapulars, and rump a dull earthy brown; a broad yellowish-white patch upon the nape. The four central tail-feathers blackish brown, tipped and margined with a paler hue. Lateral tail-feathers white, tipped and margined on exterior webs with dingy fulvous. Wings brown, the quills slightly darker brown, narrowly margined and tipped with paler brown. Lower parts dingy fulvous white.

6. *PODOCES HENDERSONI*, sp. nov. Henderson's Chough-Thrush.

*Male*.—Dimensions: length 11·5 inches; expanse 18; tail 4·2; wing 5·4; bill at front 1·5; tarsus 1·6.



*Plumage*.—Tail, quills (except a broad white bar), the greater coverts, and the whole top of the head and nape black, with a metallic purplish blue lustre. Most of the feathers of the head with a minute rufescent white speck at the tip. All the primaries with a very broad white bar extending from near the bases to near the tips, and, except on the first primary, occupying the outer as well as the inner webs. The rest of the plumage somewhat pale Jay-colour, a mixture of pale rufous and fulvous fawn, with, especially on the back and rump, a vinaceous tinge, becoming paler beneath and albescent on the chin, cheeks, and lower tail-coverts.

7. *SUYA ALBOSUPERCILIARIS*, sp. nov. The Yarkand Warbler.

*Male*.—Dimensions: length 7 inches; expanse 8; tail from vent 4; wing 2·5; bill at front 0·55; tarsus 0·95.

*Plumage*.—A long superciliary stripe from the nostrils over the lores, eyes, and ear-coverts white. A dark brown moustachial stripe from the gape, under the eyes and ear-coverts. Top and back of the head reddish desert-colour or pale rufous brown, with a faint vinaceous tinge towards the forehead, each feather with a narrow dark brown central stripe; back of the neck, back, and rump desert-colour, the feathers of the back with dark central streaks. Chin, throat, and lower parts white, tinged on breast, flanks, and tibial feathers with pale rufous buff. Wings brown; tail dark brown, with numerous narrow, close-set, obsolete bars, only seen in certain lights.

All these and some other known, but hitherto unfigured, species, will be figured in the little brochure that Dr. Henderson and I are preparing.

It will be remembered that I questioned the occurrence of the true Golden Eagle within our limits. To the kindness of Mr. Wilson, better known as "Mountaineer," I now owe two noble specimens of this species, shot between Mussowree and the Snowy Range, in the neighbourhood of the latter, and also a valuable note on the distribution and habits of the species in the Himalayahs, which will appear in Part I. No. 3 of my "Rough Notes."

Mr. Gould has lately characterized a new Eastern Starling

under the name of *Sturnus purpurascens*. Allow me to characterize another as

*STURNUS NITENS*, sp. nov.

Dimensions: length 7·75 inches; bill at front 0·95; wing 4·75; tail 2·6; tarsus 1·1.

*Description*.—Bill yellow. Legs and feet reddish brown.

Plumage:—Whole bird absolutely spotless. Face, head, and throat deep purplish blue; ear-coverts with a greenish gloss. Neck all round, upper back, and breast a bright very ruddy purple; lower portion of back and upper tail-coverts with a coppery and green gloss. Abdomen black, with a green metallic gloss. Wing-coverts dark green, with a golden gloss. Under tail-coverts black, with a faint purple and green gloss.

This species is allied to *S. unicolor* of Europe, but differs in being much smaller, having a much less compressed and more spatulate-shaped bill, much shorter breast-hackles, smaller feet, feebler claws, and in its brilliant plumage, so different from the nearly uniform purplish black of the Sardinian Starling.

*Habitat*. Cashmere, Peshawur Valley, and Afghanistan.

Dr. Henderson and I propose to figure this and other new species in our forthcoming notes on the ornithology of the Yarkand Expedition.

Since writing my note on *Otis tarda* I have received, in a second batch of birds from Murdan, what I believe is even a greater novelty, viz. a magnificent specimen of the great Snowy Owl (*Nyctea nivea*).

I have repeatedly received information of the occurrence in the cliffs overhanging the Cabul river and other localities at the western extremity of the Peshawur Valley, of a huge white Owl; but it never occurred to me that this could be the Snowy Owl, considering the geographical position of the Peshawur Valley, which hardly passes 34° north latitude.

The acquisition of this specimen sets the matter at rest. The bird measured in the flesh by Dr. Johnson was a male. Length 23"; wing 17·25"; expanse 60"; tail from vent 9·25". Foot, greatest length 4", greatest width 4·25". Wings when closed reached to within 2" of end of tail. Weight 4 lbs. 12 oz.



Bill black ; irides bright yellow. The specimen, though not a young bird, is not a very old one, as the whole upper surface is barred transversely with brown, as are also the sides and flanks and the greater portion of the middle of the abdomen. The whole of the lores, forehead, broad streak over the eye, cheeks, ear-coverts, chin, throat, middle of breast, middle of lower abdomen, vent, lower tail-coverts, legs and feet-feathers, axillaries, wing-lining, and nape unbarred white. The rump and upper tail-coverts sparingly barred. The rest of the plumage pretty regularly barred.

My shikaree, who was with Dr. Johnson and who has now returned to me, reports having seen several other and some much larger specimens. The occurrence of this species, apparently as a permanent resident (for the bird was killed on the 3rd March), in the mountains separating Afghanistan from the Peshawur Valley appears to me to be a most noteworthy fact.

I have long had in my collection a very beautiful Thrush, which, having never carefully examined, I referred to *Turdus chrysolaus*, Temm., *Geocichla dissimilis*, Blyth, olim.

Having now looked up Mr. Blyth's original description, and consulted the 'Fauna Japonica' and the 'Planches Coloriées,' I have ascertained that my specimen does not belong to this species. It may possibly prove to be well known ; but I believe it to be new, and I will therefore take this opportunity of characterizing it very briefly :—

#### GEOCICHLA TRICOLOR, sp. nov.

Dimensions (dry skin) : length 8·5 inches ; wing 4·6 ; tail from vent 3·2 ; bill at front 0·7 ; tarsus 1·1.

*Description*.—Bill yellow ; legs and feet fleshy yellow.

Plumage :—The whole head, neck, throat, breast, back, wings, upper tail-coverts, and tail dusky blackish slate-colour, almost quite black upon the top and back of the head, greyer on back and rump, and browner on quills and lateral tail-feathers. Wing-lining, lateral portions of upper abdomen, sides, and tibial feathers bright orange-ferruginous ; centre of upper two-thirds of abdomen, whole of lower two-thirds of abdomen, vent, flanks,

and lower tail-coverts, and the extreme tip of the chin pure white.

*Habitat.* Hill Tipperah.

I have lately received from Capt. Unwin, of the 5th Goorkhas, a pair of Swans, killed on the 17th January 1871 at the Jubbee stream, on the borders of the Hazara and Rawulpindee districts. Swans appear to be regular annual visitants to this locality and several other places lying between Rawulpindee and the western limits of the Peshawur Valley. Neither of these Swans is adult. The general colour of the lower surface is a dull white; of the upper whitey-brown. The crown and occiput wood-brown; the greater portion of the wing, the scapulars, and rump are wood- or sandy brown. There is nowhere any trace of a "sooty grey." The brown is essentially a buffy or sandy brown, though here and there, as in the feathers of the base of the neck, a faint greyish shade is intermingled.

These birds are therefore clearly not the Polish Swan, which is white at all ages. The bill exhibits no trace of a tubercle; the feathers of the forehead are prolonged to a point, only very slightly truncated. The colouring of the soft parts was carefully noted in the fresh specimen by Capt. Unwin, and even in the dried specimen is clearly distinguishable. If from each side of the frontal tongue of feathers, about half an inch from its point, a slightly curving line be drawn to a point on the edge of the upper mandible about a quarter of an inch from the gape, the whole of the space enclosed by such line between it and the eye is perfectly black. At the extreme point of the frontal feathers, again, is a black band about a quarter of an inch wide, which extends right and left over the whole narial space. The nail is black; the rest of the bill was light grey. The legs and feet, I may add, were greyish black. Both male and female, though differing somewhat in size, are precisely similar both as regards plumage and coloration of the bill. The bill is slightly spatulate. In the male the upper mandible is 1.1" wide opposite the nostrils, and 1.23" wide near the tip. The following are dimensions of both birds measured in the flesh:—

*Male.* Length 55.5 inches; expanse 84.37; wing 23.12; tail from vent 8.5; bill at front, straight from termination of frontal

plumes to tip 3·5, from anterior angle of eye 5·15, from gape 4; tarsus 4·05; mid toe to root of claw 5; hind toe 1; foot, greatest length, 8·37; breadth 6·62. Weight 15 lbs.

*Female*. Length 53·12 inches; expanse 84·37; wing 21·38; bill at front, from frontal plumes straight to tip 3·55, from anterior angle of eye 4·75, from gape 3·9; tarsus 3·8; mid toe to root of claw 4·8; hind toe 0·7; foot, greatest length 7·5, greatest width 6·5. Weight 13 lbs. In both the irides were dark brown.

I cannot satisfactorily identify this species; it is too large for *Cygnus americanus*; and, moreover, neither the distribution of colour on the bill corresponds, nor is there any trace of either the deep leaden tint of the plumage of the young or the light bluish grey of the adult in winter. It is, of course, much too big for Bewick's Swan; while, as regards the Hooper, the black of the bill is at the base, and not at the tip as in this latter.

There remains the Mute Swan, which unfortunately is not included by Macgillivray, and in regard to which neither Yarrell nor the Naturalist's Library gives detailed measurements or any full description of the young; but it would appear that the colouring of the young in this species is a nearly uniform sooty greyish brown above and a lighter shade of greyish brown below. Moreover there is not the faintest trace of a tubercle, and the shape of the bill is entirely that of *C. americanus* and not at all that of *C. olor* as figured by Yarrell. From the frontal feathers to beyond the end of the nasal fossæ, a distance of very nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch, the culmen is a perfectly straight line. Beyond this there is a very shallow concavity to the posterior margin of the nail. It seems hardly possible that this should be a new species; but unless, notwithstanding all that I have said, they are really the young of *C. olor* or else of *C. buccinator*\* (of which latter I know nothing), they must be new, and should bear the name of their discoverer, Captain Unwin, and should stand as *Cygnus unwini*.

\* [The bill of *C. buccinator* is entirely black. The birds here described appear to us to be referable to the young of *Cygnus olor*, the tubercle of the bill being undeveloped and the yellow of the anterior portion of the bill not yet assumed.—ED.]